

Peterson, Canute, House
10 North Main Street
Ephraim
Sanpete County
Utah

HABS No. U-64

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UTAH
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. U-64

CANUTE PETERSON HOUSE

Location: 10 North Main Street, Ephraim, Sanpete
County, Utah.
Geographic Location Code: 43-0420-039
Latitude: 39° 21' 48" N Longitude: 111° 35' 12" W

Present Owner: Richard Nibley

Present Occupant: Mr. & Mrs. Richard Nibley

Present Use: Residence

Statement of
Significance: This is a fine example of an early home built
by a Mormon leader who was often host to
Wilford Woodruff in the days of persecution of
polygamists.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

Canute Peterson

Richard Nibley

2. Date of erection: 1869

3. Architect: Believed to be William H. Folsom, Archi-
tect of the Manti Temple.

4. Original plan and construction of building:

Mr. Eldon L. Frost describes events as follows:

"The quarter-block across from the Tabernacle
was selected for his future residence. A
creek crossed the road in front of the present
home. He proceeded to get material for such
a home and to his surprise and enthusiasm, a
group of Elders and churchmen came and offered
their services to erect his home. A small
rock and brick home was erected running east-
ward. Later it was extended to the proportions
which now constitute the home.

"At that time many fine artisans were arriving in the community from Europe. Some of the fine stone and brick layers were Peter C. Breinholt, and A. C. Nielsin, Sr., commonly known as "Mormon Preacher". Ukermann, of Ukermann's Planing Mill fame was an expert in wood-carving, designing and production. I am inclined to believe that some of these fine artisans had something to do with the building of the home. William W. Folsom, the architect of the Manti Temple, who was a very close friend to grandfather, may also have had a part in the designing and construction. Records seem to bear out that he spent several years at Ephraim and mostly with the Peterson family.

"It has been mentioned that the brick came from Manti, where a brick kiln was in existence at that time and did quite a business throughout the country. The fine red cedar joists must have been taken from the hills above Ephraim. The rock undoubtedly came from the rock quarry sites north-east of Ephraim. Two of his sons later operated two quarries, their names were P. C. Peterson, Sr., and Jacob Peterson. The original homestead ran from the Bank corner to the Enterprise building and east to the William G. Barton residence. There was a "half-lot" in the center of the block which was part of the property. His barn and granary were well known for their fine construction and arrangement."

5. Alterations and additions:

The original small rock and brick home was extended to the present proportions. Date unknown. The original front porch which has been removed will be replaced. The back porch was enclosed subsequent to the original construction. The rear porch posts are original on new concrete slab. Original wall-papered plaster being replaced with wallpapered gypsum board in some rooms. Original chair rails and ceiling mouldings have been removed.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

Paul Goeldner in the Utah Catalogue of the Historic American Buildings Survey relates the following:

"Increasingly harsh anti-polygamy laws were enacted by Congress in the 1880's and polygamists were not only disfranchised but the men were subject to arrest, fines and imprisonment. Places of concealment were necessary and the Canute Peterson House provides an ingenious solution. A trap door in the dining room floor opens to a shallow crawl space. This door is sufficiently obvious or betrayable to have warranted the investigation of the U. S. Marshals, but it was merely a delaying device to permit the use of the 'real' polygamy pit, a larger space reached through a trap door in the guest room floor. When this was covered with a rug and a bed it concealed the fugitive safely, if not comfortably. It is ironic that Wilford Woodruff, whose patriotism had led him to be baptized for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, had to be hidden from U. S. Officers when he was a guest of Peterson's at the time of the dedication of the Manti Temple."

C. Sources of Information:

Frost, Eldon L., letter . . supplement 2.

Goeldner, Paul. Utah Catalog -- Historic American Buildings Survey, Utah Heritage Foundation, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1969.

Historical data (attached) prepared by John L. Giusti.

Knell, Lee C., letter . . . supplement 1.

Prepared by Gary D. Forbush
December, 1969

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest: This is a fine early Utah house made more interesting by its polygamy pits.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent - undergoing restoration.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: A 43'1" x 42'10", two-story, rectangular house with attic and partial basement.
2. Foundations: Limestone.
3. Wall construction, finish, and color: Sun-dried yellow brick. Adobe interior partitions.
4. Structural system, framing: Masonry walls. Heavy timber floor and roof framing.
5. Porches and stoops: The front porch has been removed although it is planned to replace it as in old photos. The rear porch posts are original on new concrete slab.
6. Chimneys: Four brick. The three on the ridgeline have ornamental brick caps. One at northeast corner is more recent.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Front entrance and door above: 4-panel doors with transoms and side-lights in deep paneled frames. Rear door - glazed panel above, two-panels below, 6 light transom.
 - b. Windows: Double hung: Six-over-six at south and west; nine-over-six at north and east.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable with single slope porch and lean-to at rear. Green composition shingles on gable. New cedar shingles at rear.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Cornice all the way around has large dentils, an applique swag and paired brackets with pendants.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor - Entrance and stairhall with parlor on right, dining room on left, kitchen at center rear with pantry at left, guest room at right. New room at northeast replaces old summer kitchen.
- b. Basement under parlor - False polygamy pit under dining room; polygamy pit under guest room.
- c. Second floor - Bedrooms over each first floor room.
- d. Attic - Open space with walls below projecting up through floor.

2. Stairways: Stair in entrance hall has closed stringer carved in a twisted curve at winders. Treads and risers are exposed and finished on underside. Balusters are large and wide-spaced. Basement stairs under stairs to second floor.

3. Flooring: Random width pine boards.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Original wallpapered plaster being replaced with wallpapered gypsum board in some rooms.

5. Doorways and doors: Four panel in simple framed openings. Doors at left and right of entrance have top and bottom panels horizontal. Two long vertical panels between.

6. Decorative features and trim: Simple mouldings at splayed window openings. Original chair rails and ceiling moulding have been removed.

7. Notable hardware: Porcelain knobs.

8. Lighting, type of fixtures: New electric.

9. Heating: Large fireplace in dining room has marbleized wood mantel. Other rooms were heated with stoves which have been removed.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. Orientation: The house faces Main Street (U. S. Highway 89) at west. Crowded by two-story bank building at south.
2. Outbuildings: A granary to the northeast has been partially demolished.
3. Landscaping and walks, enclosures: A picket fence curves in at entrance walk. Four large trees (three locusts and an elm) shade the front.

Prepared by Paul Goeldner, AIA
Supervisory Architect
Utah Project 1968
August 27, 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This record is part of a Utah Survey conducted in the summers of 1967 and 1968 under joint sponsorship of the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation.

Field work, historic research and record drawings were done under the direction of Project Supervisor Paul Goeldner, AIA (Texas Tech University) assisted by Project Historian John L. Giusti, AIA (University of Utah). Photographs were made by P. Kent Fairbanks of Salt Lake City.

Student Assistant Architects on the 1967 team were Robert M. Swanson and Charles W. Barrow, (University of Texas) and Kenneth L. Lambert and Keith Sorenson, (University of Utah). 1968 Student Assistant Architects were Keith Sorenson, Charles D. Harker and Robert Schriever, (University of Utah), and Donald G. Prycer, (Texas A. & M. University).